

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3802
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 7312

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, GE
SUBJ: GDR AUTHORITIES ATTEMPT TO PROTEST SPECIAL RIAS PROGRAM

SUMMARY: ON DECEMBER 16, MFA OFFICIALS PROTESTED ORALLY
TO AN EMBASSY OFFICER ABOUT A PROPOSED SPECIAL PROGRAM WHICH
THEIR SOURCES SAY IS TO BE BROADCAST TO THE GDR BY RIAS
IN THE LAST WEEKS OF DECEMBER. WE HAVE SINCE HEARD THAT
A SIMILAR GDR PROTEST WAS PRESENTED TO THE WEST BERLIN
SENAT IN THE PAST FEW DAYS. RIAS HAS INFORMED US THAT THEY
HAVE NO PLANS TO BROADCAST SUCH A PROGRAM. WE WOULD
LIKE TO RESPOND TO MFA THAT WE CANNOT ACCEPT THE PROTEST
AND THAT THE EMBASSY IS NOT THE CORRECT CHANNEL IN WHICH
TO RAISE THE MATTER.

1. EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER WAS ASKED TO GO TO THE
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON DECEMBER 16 TO MEET WITH
USA DESK OFFICER SIEMENS. TOPIC FOR MEETING WAS NOT
GIVEN IN ADVANCE AND MEETING WAS ARRANGED ONLY PREVIOUS
AFTERNOON THROUGH A TELEPHONE CALL TO EMBASSY.
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2. AFTER EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES AND A SOMEWHAT OFF-
HANDED INTRODUCTION OF ANOTHER OFFICER, MR. KEHR, ALSO
OF MFA, MR. SIEMENS READ FROM TWO PIECES OF PAPER.
THE FIRST WAS A FACTUAL STATEMENT AND THE SECOND A
PROTEST IN ADVANCE ABOUT A PROPOSED RIAS PROGRAM. THERE

WAS NO ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE THESE STATEMENTS IN WRITTEN FORM AND POLITICAL OFFICER DID NOT ASK FOR THEM. THE STATEMENTS READ APPROXIMATELY AS FOLLOWS: (A) STATEMENT OF FACTS--IT HAS COME TO THE NOTICE OF GDR AUTHORITIES THAT THE RIAS STATION IN WEST BERLIN PLANS A SPECIAL PROGRAM (SONDERSENDUNG) BEAMED TO GDR CITIZENS DURING THE LAST WEEKS OF THIS YEAR. DURING THE PROGRAM A TELEPHONE NUMBER IN WEST BERLIN WILL BE GIVEN TO THAT CITIZENS OF THE GDR WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE THEIR OPINION ABOUT THE PROGRAM DIRECTLY BY TELEPHONING THIS NUMBER. RIAS IS A AMERICAN "CONTROLLED AND FINANCED" STATION. (B) PROTEST STATEMENT--GDR AUTHORITIES REQUEST THAT YOU (THE EMBASSY) INFORM YOUR AUTHORITIES THAT THE BROADCASTING OF SUCH A PROGRAM TO CITIZENS OF THE GDR WOULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE AN "INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC." IT WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AGREEMENT AND AGAINST INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR THE PROGRAM TO TAKE PLACE. IN ADDITION, THE ALLOWING OF SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD CONTRAVENE THE FINAL ACT OF HELSINKI. THE GDR AUTHORITIES ASK YOUR AUTHORITIES TO STOP (UNTERBINDEN) THE BROADCASTING OF SUCH A PROGRAM. IF THE SHOULD TAKE PLACE, GDR AUTHORITIES WILL TAKE APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO PROTECT (BEWAHREN) THE GDR'S INTERESTS.

3. EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER REPLIED THAT HE IS NOT A SPECIALIST IN THIS FIELD BUT THAT IT IS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT RIAS IS CONSIDERED TO BE A GERMAN STATION. MR. KEHR DISPUTED THIS SAYING THAT IT WAS THEIR UNDERCONFIDENTIAL

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STANDING THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED RIAS.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE GDR AUTHORITIES HAVE SOUGHT TO RAISE WITH THE EMBASSY A SPECIFIC MATTER RELATED TO WEST BERLIN. WE HAVE ALSO LEARNED THAT A PROTEST SIMILAR TO THE ABOVE WAS PRESENTED TO THE WEST BERLIN SENAT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS. IN ADDITION, UPON INQUIRING OF THE AMERICAN DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF RIAS ON DECEMBER 16, WE WERE INFORMED THAT THERE IS NO PLAN FOR RIAS TO BROADCAST A "SPECIAL PROGRAM" OF THE KIND AND DURING THE TIME INDICATED IN THE GDR PRESENTATION TO THE EMBASSY. THE GDR "PROTEST" THEREFORE APPEARS TO BE INCORRECT WITH REGARD TO THE PARTICULAR PROGRAM WHICH THEY HAVE DESCRIBED.

5. COMMENT: THE OPTIONS WHICH COULD BE FOLLOWED APPEAR TO BE: A) TO LET THE MATTER REST WITHOUT MAKING ANY

RESPONSE TO THE GDR'S ORAL PRESENTATION; B) TO REJECT THE PROTEST BY INFORMING MFA THAT THE EMBASSY IS NOT THE PROPER CHANNEL IN WHICH TO RAISE THIS MATTER; AND C) INFORM MFA THAT WE HAVE RAISED THE MATTER WITH OUR AUTHORITIES AND FIND THAT THE GDR'S COMPLAINT IS GROUNDLESS. WE COULD ALSO STATE THAT BROADCASTING WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE INCONSISTENT WITH CSCE IN ANY CASE, SINCE UNDER CSCE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION BY RADIO BROADCASTING IS ENCOURAGED. WE WOULD NOT IN ANY OF THE ABOVE OPTIONS, PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION ON RIAS WHICH, AT THIS STAGE, IS BESIDE THE POINT.

6. EMBASSY'S PREFERENCE IS FOR OPTION (B) GIVEN ABOVE. THE PRESENTATION COULD BE GIVEN ORALLY AND IN LOW KEY AT THE WORKING LEVEL, I.E. IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE "PROTEST" WAS MADE. WE DO NOT FORESEE ANY UNTOWARD REACTION FROM OUR GDR CONTACTS IN THIS APPROACH. WITH REGARD TO OPTION (A), WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS
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WOULD IN THE INTERESTS OF US-GDR RELATIONS GENERALLY. WHILE OPTION (C) PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A POINT ABOUT CSCE, WE TEND TO BELIEVE THIS IS NOT THE BEST CONTEXT IN WHICH TO MAKE THE POINT.

7. THE FOREGOING HAS BEEN COORDINATED WITH USMISSION USBERLIN.

ACTION REQUESTED: THAT THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDE THE EMBASSY WITH APPROPRIATE GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO THIS GDR PROTEST.POLANSKY

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